Numb. 105.

MERCATOR:

From Thurſday, January 21. to Saturday, January 23. 1713.

The French *King's Edict brought to prove, that their Manufactures are not ſo good as ours.*
A manifeſt Difference between AS LOW *and as Cheap.*
The French *not able to hurt us in our Trade in any Market in* Europe.

MEN will never leave talking Simply till they leave talking of Things out of their Element, and which they know are remote to their Underſtanding: This is the Caſe of the Oppoſers of the Treaty of Commerce; and this makes them take ſuch exceſſive Pains to prove to the whole World, that they know nothing of the Matter.

They have now Publiſhed an Edict of the French King's, for encouraging ſome Woollen Manufactures in France; by which any Man may be convinc'd, what Difficulty the People of France find in imitating our Manufactures. The *MERCATOR* was ſurpriz'd indeed to find them Publiſh a Thing ſo directly againſt their own Arguments; but when it is obſerved, how infatuated they are in other things, we need not wonder any more indeed. If they had waited but a little, the *MERCATOR* had publiſhed this very Edict for them; for the *MERCATOR* deſires no better, than to have the French themſelves acknowledge, how hard they are driven to bring their Goods to be ſo cheap at Market as the Engliſh, and therefore joins with them to make this Edict as publick as poſſible: As follows:

ARREST of the King's Council, ordaining, that the Stuffs called Bays, Perpetuana's, &c. *of the Manufacture which are ſent to* Italy, *ſhall pay but* 30 *Sols per* C. October 23. 1703.

'THE King having, by Arreſt of Council of the '14th of July laſt, for the Reaſons there explain'd, 'regulated the Duties upon the Exportation of Stuffs 'called Bays, Perpetuana's, &c. which are ſent into 'Italy any way whatſoever, at 10 Sols per Cent. and 'his Majeſty being informed, that there is a very conſi'derable Quantity of the ſaid Goods conſumed in Italy 'of the Manufacture of England, and that it will be 'very advantageous for the Manufactures of the King'dom to fix the Duties of Exportation ſo, as that the 'Merchants may be able to furniſh Italy with the ſaid 'Stuffs at the ſame Price, as the Manufacturers of Eng'land do, which his Majeſty being willing to grant, and 'to encourage a Trade, which is ſo advantageous to his 'Sub'ects: has therefore ORDAINED, and does here'by ORDAIN, that the ſaid Stuffs, called Bays, Per'petuana's, &c. of the Manufacture of this Kingdom, 'which are ſent into Italy by any way whatſoever, ſhall 'pay but 30 Sols per Cent. inſtead of all the Duties, 'which they uſed to pay, and the ſaid Stuffs ſhall be 'exempted and diſcharged from paying the Duties of 'the Cuſtom-houſe of *Lyons*, and the Duties of 'the Cuſtom-houſe of *Valence*, and the Cuſtoms of '*Bayonne*, and from all other Duties, as *Octrois*, *Peages*, 'and *Paſſages*, which are levied to his Majeſty's Uſe, or 'the Uſe of particular Lords, Cities, and Communities, 'as well for their Importation and Paſſage, as for their 'Exportation out of the Provinces of the Kingdom by 'Land or Water, without Prejudice, nevertheleſs, to 'the Tranſire granted to the Merchants upon the Mer'chandizes ſold in the Fairs of *Lyons*, *Bourdeaux*, and 'Tr y s, his Majeſty forbidding the Farmer to levy any 'higher Duties upon the ſaid Stuffs, upon pain of re'ſtoring double, and all Charges, Damages, and In'tereſts.

Done at Fountainbleau, Oct. 23. 1703.

Signed, *PHELYPEAUX.*

Now let any Merchant, that underſtands the Trade, conſider, what the Amount of this Edict comes to, and they will ſoon judge, whether it ſpeaks on their ſide, or on the *MERCATOR*'s ſide.

1. It tacitly acknowledges, that before this they were not able to ſell their Bays and Long Ells as cheap as the Engliſh, no not in Italy, tho' it lies at their own door.

2. It is true, that in order to do it, they obtain of the King an Abatement of all Cuſtoms, Duties, &c. 30 Sols per 100 wt. excepted, which is but a Trifle: But the Edict no where ſays, that this will do it, that it will bring down their ſaid Goods to be really ſold at the ſame Price in Italy, as the Engliſh were. It is true, it was all they could ask of the King, and they could not ask that without ſuch a Pretence; but they no where allege, that reducing the ſaid Duties would effectually do it.

3. But ſuppoſe it had been effectual to bring the French Goods to be ſold at the ſame Price as ours, *Does this prove, that they are equal in Goodneſs to the Engliſh?*

The *MERCATOR* has told them of the Dogs-hair, Broad-cloth, unſhore Dozens, Cabbage-net, Bays, and other ſorry Manufactures of the French Nation, and thinks ſtill, that they are very juſt Epithets; and thoſe Gentlemen, that have lived in France, can juſtify it to be ſo. To confute this, they bring this Edict too, which proves indeed, that the French are very deſirous to ſell as Cheap as we do in Italy; but does this prove that they are as Good?

It is alſo obſervable, the Edict aforeſaid is very juſt in one thing, (viz.) It does not ſay ſell AS CHAP as the Engliſh, but ſell at the SAME PRICE; Cheapneſs or Dearneſs is always taken from a Proportion of Goodneſs, and they might be Cheaper, tho' they were ſold for more than our Goods, if they were Better in Goodneſs: But they do not pretend to be better in Goodneſs, and they acknowledge, they could not be ſold at the ſame Price with the Engliſh without this Abatement; How then are they as Cheap?

Now let the Experience of any of our Italian Merchants be the Judge of this, if ever they ſaw any Bays or Perpetuana's from France at all; and let them bring Vouchers, if they can, to anſwer theſe two Queries:

1. Whether any of them were ever ſeen of equal Goodneſs to the Engliſh?
2. If any of them were AS GOOD, were they able to ſell them AS LOW as the Engliſh?

Here are Merchants to be produced, who do affirm of their certain knowledge, having long Reſided both in France and Italy, that the Bays and long Ells made in France

France bear no proportion in Goodneſs to the Engliſh, nor are they capable of hurting the Sale of the Engliſh at all.

To confirm this, let us ſee a little of the Arguments uſed upon the Point. Their Words are theſe:

" *If their Bays and Perpetuana's are as Cheap with a* " *Duty of* 30 *Sols per Hundred weight, as Ours without* " *any Duty at all, what if his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty* " *ſhould remit even thoſe* 30 *Sols? Why then, we ſhall not* " *be able to Export either Bays or Perpetuana's to the ſame* " *Market, without giving a Bounty a: Exportation, as we* " *do in the Caſe of Corn.*

Now there is ſo much dull Sophiſtry, ſuch Chicane and Knavery in this way of ſtating the Caſe, that the *MERCATOR* ſays, there is nothing of the Merchant in it; and therefore the *MERCATOR* is obliged to expoſe it a little, in Vindication of the Trade, as well as in Vindication of the former *MERCATORS.*

1. It is not proved, as before, that when this abatement of the Duties in France was made, that thoſe Goods were brought thereby to the *ſame Price* as Ours.
2. If they were, the Inference is wrong; they ſay AS CHEAP; the Edict ſays not a word of Cheap or Dear, but ſays *at the SAME PRICE*; and as the Matter of Fact is, that none of the ſaid Goods are made ſo good as Ours, ſo by this Edict it ſeems, that tho' they were not ſo good, yet they could not be Sold ſo low as Ours neither.

But now, if it were granted to them, that the French Goods were of equal Goodneſs and Price, which yet the *MERCATOR* does not grant, becauſe he knows the Fact to be otherwiſe; yet mark how they are Confounded in the Caſe, even by Demonſtration; 30 Sols per Hundred weight, is all the Duty they pay: This, by their own Calculation, is not above an 80th part of the Value, yet this is ſo conſiderable with them, that if this 80th part ſhould be likewiſe remitted by the French King, we ſhould loſe the whole Trade, and Export not a Piece of Bays, or a Perpet to Italy, after it.

But why ſo poſitive? why ſo poſitive? Is our Manufacture ſo hard driven, that ſo trifling a Difference ſhould ſink it at once? Let theſe Men go ask the Colcheſter Bay-Makers, how often their Bays riſe and fall from 13 d. $\frac{1}{2}$, by every degree up to 17 d. and down again to 13 d. Can they tell us, what Price it is, that the French keep pace with us in? If they Sold at the ſame Price with us, when Bays were at 14 d. or 15 d. what became of them, when we fell a Peny or Three half pence an Ell? It ſeems they could not fall too, for the 30 Sols per Hundred is ſuch a Nicety with them, it ſeems, as to turn the whole Trade: Now this 30 Sols is not half a Farthing an Ell upon the Bays by a great deal; and our Workmen can Trade with the fall of 2 d. which is ſixteen times as much; How then can half a Farthing Ruin the Trade? Again: Our Merchants find a Market, nay, and in Italy too, when at 2 d. nay, at 3 d. advance, which is 24 times the 30 Sols per Hundred weight, notwithſtanding the Cheapneſs of the French; How then do they make it out, that if this trifle of 30 Sols per Hundred weight ſhould be remitted, we ſhould loſe our Market?

The *MERCATOR* takes the liberty to ſay, that our Tradeſmen go as near as moſt Manufacturers do; but we are not ſo hard run neither, as to be ſhut out of a Market, or want a Bounty for Exportation of our Manufactures, for half a Farthing an Ell upon our Bays, or for a Peny in Six and eight Pence on our Perpets. Any Man, that knows his Right-hand from his Left in the Trade, muſt laugh at ſuch an Aſſertion as this, and ſay it is moſt ridiculouſly Ignorant and Abſurd.

But to bring this to a Demonſtration, let us take the Times and compare them. The Date of this Edict is October 23. 1703.

Let any Merchant examine the Price of Bays in England at that time, and he ſhall find, that notwithſtanding this pretended equality of Price, and notwithſtanding the Bays have been, a thouſand times ſince that, above 20 times the 30 Sols per Hundred weight advanced upon the common Price, which they were Sold at then, yet even all the War, and to this time, whatſoever the Price has been, we have ſhipped Bays and Perpets, in great Quantities, to Italy, and never wanted a Market, and, which is more, never were match'd by the French, much leſs outdone by them, either in Price or Goodneſs.

But what is all this to proving what theſe Men have laid down, and which the *MERCATOR* has ſo often Oppoſed, (viz.) That they do make their Goods as good and as Cheap as ours, and that they have a Quantity ſufficient to ſupply themſelves, or any other Markets, ſo as not to want our Manufactures at home, and to be able to get our Trade from us abroad.

Theſe are the things they have been taught to ſay, and to put into the Mouths of their Party; and now when they come to the proof of it, all they have to ſhew is *this Edict*, wherein the French themſelves acknowledge, that they were hardly able to Sell ſo low as we did; and that for that purpoſe, all the Duties, Cuſtoms, Octrois, Peages, Paſſages, &c. muſt be taken off, except a trifle of 30 Sols per Hundred weight.

But in all theſe, do not ſay one word of the Manufacture being equal to the Engliſh in Goodneſs.

Now that all they ever did in theſe things, amounts to very little, and that the Goodneſs of thoſe Goods they do make, is ſo far from coming up to ours, that they are not able to injure the Sale of ours, is to be known, by examining the Entries of our Bays and Perpets for Italy; and if it appears, that we Export fewer ſince 1703, than we did before, then ſomething might be ſaid: And this I Challenge them to prove, if they can.

The Deſign of this Author, and indeed of his whole Party againſt your Argument is plain; they would fain prove the French are able to Underſell our Manufactures, and that the French Woollen Goods are as good as Ours and Cheaper, and conſequently that they can match us in any Place of Europe.

The Treachery and Baſeneſs of this has been obſerved already in the *MERCATOR*, and how it ſounds out of an Engliſhman's Mouth: What would foreign Nations ſay to our Merchants abroad, when they come to buy our Goods, were not the difference ſo viſible, that the French themſelves own it? And therefore it is to be obſerved, theſe Men never offered a word of Anſwer to what was formerly obſerved in the *MERCATOR*, (viz.) *That take the Goodneſs of their Goods with the Price, and the Engliſh Manufactures are the Cheapeſt in the World.* This will never be denied: What ſignifies all the treacherous Pains they take to depreciate their own Country, to undervalue our Goods? they do but play at Shuttlecock with the Word AS CHEAP, and AS CHEAP: But let them ſpeak to the point, are they AS GOOD too? If they are not AS GOOD they are not AS CHEAP; beſides, they have paumed that Word upon us, there is no ſuch Word AS CHEAP in all the French King's Edict; even the French themſelves knew better. But to Sell at *the ſame Price*, was the Deſign. Now there is a manifeſt difference between Goods being *at the ſame Price*, and being AS CHEAP. The Caſe is plain, tho' the French Goods were never ſo good as Ours, yet it was difficult for them to Sell them ſo low, as our Merchants Sold Ours too; now, ſays the Edict, *It will be very advantageous to the Manufacturers of the Kingdom, to fix the Duties ſo, as that the Merchants may be able to furniſh Italy with the ſaid Stuffs, AT THE SAME PRICE, as the Manufacturers of England do.* Mark! It will be advantageous to Sell at the ſame Price; yet becauſe then ſome Men wanting Judgment, may be deceived, may take one for the other, or think them equal in Goodneſs, as they are of the ſame Name and Price; whereas before being worſe in Quality, and higher in Price too, they could do little or nothing with them.

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